



# FY 2014 PROPOSED BUDGET

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. What has the City done to reduce expenses in the last few years?**

The City has implemented numerous cost saving measures including reducing the workforce, reorganizing departments for efficiency, cutting discretionary spending, and deferring maintenance, vehicle replacements, and capital projects. The City has cut more than \$83 million in expenses since FY 2008.

### **2. How many positions have been eliminated?**

The City has eliminated 254 positions since FY 2007. We have reduced our workforce from 2,682 full-time equivalent positions (FTE) to our current level of 2,428 FTEs.

### **3. When was the last time the City increased property taxes?**

The proposed budget for FY 2014 keeps the City's low property tax of 4.1193 unchanged. This will be the seventh consecutive fiscal year that our property tax rate has not increased. In fact, you would have to go back 27 years -- to 1986 -- to find a time when Fort Lauderdale had a lower tax rate than 4.1193.

### **4. When was the last time the City increased the Fire Assessment Fee?**

The City's Fire Assessment Fee has not increased since 2008. Since then, fuel costs have escalated dramatically, the number of responses to emergencies has increased, and we have opened seven new fire stations! Our response times have also improved. Last year, Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue responded to more than 42,900 calls for service with an outstanding average first unit response time of four minutes and thirty-eight seconds.

### **5. How was the City impacted by the downturn in the economy?**

The economic downturn significantly impacted property tax revenue. The City received \$129 million in property taxes in FY 2007 and will receive an estimated \$93.9 million in FY 2013. Fort Lauderdale neighbors have paid \$144 million less in property taxes since FY 2007. This decrease in revenue to the City was exacerbated by unfunded mandates and substantial decreases in intergovernmental revenues.

### **6. How have service levels to neighbors been impacted?**

Despite the significant reduction in the workforce and shrinking revenues, the City has preserved service levels for our neighbors and has continued to enhance quality of life through the acquisition of four (4) new parks, the opening of seven (7) new Fire-Rescue stations, and the implementation of new programs and events throughout the City. We are committed to maintaining the quality of life in Fort Lauderdale; our neighbors deserve it!

### **7. With such a significant reduction in revenue, how have we managed to balance the budget in recent years?**

In order to keep taxes low during the most difficult economic times, while at the same time preserving service levels and maintaining quality of life, the City used a portion of its General Fund reserves to help balance past budgets. The FY 2014 Proposed Budget does not include the use of any reserves. It is a structurally balanced budget that will serve as the foundation for a fiscally sound and sustainable future.

### **8. How can I provide input on the proposed budget?**

The City's budget process is both transparent and inclusive. Public hearings on the FY 2014 Proposed Budget will take place on Tuesday, September 3rd and Thursday, September 12th at 6 pm in the Commission Chambers, located in City Hall at 100 N. Andrews Avenue. The Fire Assessment public hearing will take place as part of the September 12th meeting. We invite you to review the proposed budget on our website at [www.fortlauderdale.gov](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov) and encourage you to attend the public hearings to provide input on the proposed budget.